



## Michigan Fire Inspectors Society

P.O. Box 193, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49004-0193

January 27, 2016

Representative Franz  
Chair – Regulatory Reform Committee

Dear Rep. Franz and Committee Members,

I am here today representing the Michigan Fire Inspectors Society who has over 600 members providing fire prevention education and code enforcement throughout the State of Michigan. We are speaking in support of HB 5102 that provides a qualified fire service representation to the state's construction code commission and ask that this committee on Regulatory Reform move this bill forward to the House floor.

Michigan has a fire problem and we are not adequately addressing it. Last year we had 103 civilians lose their lives in fires and we have lost 11 already this year. Michigan ranks at or near the highest in fire deaths in the United States when adjusted for population. We have a problem.

The work environment for the firefighter is the commercial and residential buildings located in every community in our state. The firefighter is charged with going to work in these buildings when they are under attack from fire or other significant threats to the building integrity. This is an environment that few people, other than the firefighter have experience in. In fact, once the building is granted a certificate of occupancy by the Building Official, it is the fire service that must deal with that building for as long as it is standing. Michigan's building codes need to help ensure that this work environment does not cause unexpected catastrophic failures that place our firefighters at an unreasonable risk. The fire service needs to have a say regarding the building codes that impact the safety of our personnel.

The Michigan Building Code addresses fire code regulations. In fact, there are 120 references to the International Fire Code in seventeen (17) different chapters. In addition, there are over 170 references to fifty-three (53) different standards of the National Fire Protection Association. Yet the adopting body of the MBC has little fire code expertise. The International Building Code is the parent model code of the MBC. Both the International Code Council and the NFPA recognize the importance of the fire service expertise in the development of their codes and standards by including fire service professionals in their development committees and groups.

The Michigan Legislature started this transformation of recognizing the expertise of the fire service by passing Public Act 150 of 2013 that allows qualified fire inspectors to be registered through the BCC to review and inspect fire protection systems that are required by the Michigan Building Code. This act recognized that the Building Code Official and the Fire Code Official are on the same team with the same common goal, safety in the built environment. HB 5102 helps continue that partnership by placing building experts and fire experts on the same team.

**International Fire Marshals Association**  
Chapter 1

